

Rethinking Bowhunting Quivers

Bowhunters cannot carry their ammo in their pockets like gun hunters do. Arrows are long, awkward projectiles that are much more cumbersome to take afield than rifle shells. Arrows must be ferried afield conveniently and safely. The only way to do this is with a quiver of some sort. There's nothing more bothersome than having a bowhunting quiver that gets in the way, is noisy, inconvenient, or makes your arrows less accurate.

When selecting a bowhunting quiver you have four basic styles from which to choose: quick-detach quivers, bowmounted quivers, back quivers, and hip quivers. Whatever your personal choice, always consider safety, convenience, stability, and silence while making a selection. There is a plethora of choices in today's archery marketplace. Many are first rate, but just as many are not. Most bowhunters obviously like quality in all of their equipment. A bow quiver should be no exception. A broadhead tipped arrow shouldn't be bounced around or abused. Arrows should be taken care of as well as possible at all times. Even slightly askew shafts will miss their mark, causing a miss, or worse, a poor hit. The best way to ensure your arrows are well protected is with a well-chosen quality arrow quiver. Let's look at the four types and their pluses and minuses.

Quick-Detach Quivers. Many bowhunters carry a quick-detachable bow quiver attached to their bow to ferry their arrows to their hunting destination and simply remove the quiver once settled in. Oftentimes sitting for long periods of time is more comfortable without arrows attached directly to the bow. Many bowhunters know this and therefore simply remove their quiver after settling into a tree stand or ground blind and hunt accordingly. Quick-detach quivers are usually fastened with one bolt or clip for quick loosening and easy removal. These quivers hang nicely in a tree from a hook or a bungee cord. However, most experts will warn you that shooting with a quick-detach quiver still attached to the bow is not advisable, since these designs rattle like a buzz bait when shot. They're not designed to tighten very snugly to the bow, just temporarily for transport. Loud vibrating noise can definitely spook game.

Bow-Mounted Quivers. Bow-mounted quivers are easily the most popular type of quiver used today. Realistically, with a bowmounted quiver, the bow and the arrows become one convenient unit. When selecting a bowmounted quiver, durability and solidity should come first and foremost. Briefly, there are two important reasons for attaching a quiver to your bow and leaving it there. First, arrows are very easy to transport over even the most rugged terrain compared to any other design. They hug the bow riser and limbs closely, making them no more inconvenient to carry than the bow itself. Second, backup shots are always close at hand. Even though archery is considered a one shot sport, many times animals have lived another year due to a bowhunter being unable to lock-and-load a second arrow quickly and quietly. It happens every year. Swinging your

body or arm around a tree or hide reaching for another arrow is movement that can be picked up by your prey and now the animal is tuned into your location. For this purpose, bow-mounted quivers remain popular. The best bow-mounted quivers house your broadheads beneath a roomy plastic hood. These quivers grip shafts slightly above the fletching to prevent excessive rattle and are attached to the bow with two separate stainless steel bolts. These quivers also hug the bow riser closely to prevent bow imbalance and excessive torque (causing sight pins to cant). Most bow manufacturers today make their own bow-attached quivers and provide their risers with two holes (at the top and bottom) to hold the hood and the gripper arm.

Back Quivers. Back quivers looked grim in the old Robin Hood movies but have been improved ten-fold for modern archers. Today, most bowhunters who favor a back quiver enjoy the Cat Quiver design for carrying arrows securely on their backs. Safety is a very important feature with a back quiver design, since broadhead cuts can be an issue for careless users. Such quivers should be worn and used with caution to prevent such accidents from happening. The first back quivers were nothing more than leather pouches with straps that hugged the chest. These quivers were noisy and cumbersome and pretty much just a flat pain to use. The fletching of the arrows would stick up high above the head and snag brush. The snags made an awful racket and created irritating tangles. Broadheads would grind together at the bottom and dull their blades. You couldn't pay me to try another. Thankfully, the Cat Quiver style eliminated all of these hassles. Cat Quiver style back quivers are now fully adjustable, comfortable, and roomy. Cat Quivers are a backpack/quiver combination made in silent fleece fabric for quiet movement. The design places the quiver directly behind your back and head. Arrows are completely shielded and the different backpack sizes allow you to carry other gear inside with a breeze.

Hip Quivers. Belt quivers have always been a favorite style for target archers. The roomier models are able to carry notebooks, binoculars, notes, pins, repair equipment, and anything else deemed necessary on the target range; shooting and sighting in equipment is definitely a convenience. To this day many archers feel they can get better accuracy out of their bow without the extra weight and lopsided feel of bow-mounted quivers. I must tell you that there are some real solid losers out there where hip quivers are concerned, so be cautious. The best hip quivers are solid one-piece designs that hug the thigh closely and have a dependable, tightening strap that fastens around your lower thigh to prevent the quiver from swinging as you move. If your hip quiver swings as you move it will get annoying and cause excessive movement as you slink through brush. Expect to pay US\$50 to US\$60 for a dependable model that will give you years of painless use.

Four, Six, or Eight Arrows? Eight-arrow quivers are almost standard with most bowhunters, especially those going after backcountry game. Some

bowhunters like the lightweight, less bulky feel of a four- and even some six-arrow quivers. Some compound bows feel heavy as an anvil after a long hike and hard day of hunting. Some consider the difference in weight with half as many arrows makes a difference, so they prefer to carry fewer arrows. A good many bowhunters have an eight-arrow quiver attached to their riser and only carry four or five arrows in it. If that's your case, try a smaller, sleeker fourarrow quiver model and feel the difference in weight and bulk firsthand. It may seem substantial, or it may not. There are only a few six-arrow quivers on the market. However, if you like your arrow supply somewhere between the happy medium of eight and four, investigate these styles further. Personally, I wouldn't do any kind of bowhunting with less than four arrows, even though it usually only takes one and a second for backup. But you can lose arrows along the trail and you don't want to encounter that monster buck with just a couple of arrows. Four arrows should be the minimum number to carry, and I think most bowhunters would agree.